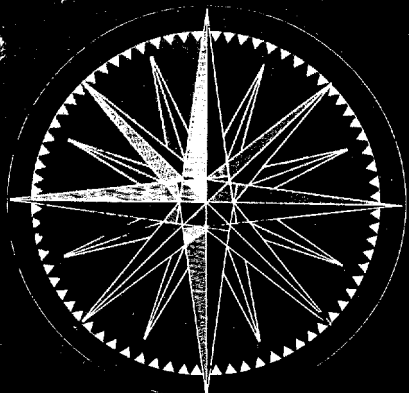


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Release 2006/07/18 : CIA-RDP79-00927A004000010004-5

COPY NO.

0272/63B

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22 March 1963

SPECIAL REPORT

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

MOROCCO UNDER KING HASSAN

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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22 March 1963

MOROCCO UNDER KING HASSAN

During his two years on the throne of Morocco, King Hassan has consolidated his authority in his own country, has sought recognition as a leader of African and Arab nations, especially in the Maghreb, and has guided Morocco's non-alignment policy slightly toward the West. His visit to Washington on 27 and 28 March will mark a further effort to promote his personal stature and to secure help in solving his country's economic problems.

Consolidation of Power

The 33-year-old Hassan has maneuvered adroitly with increasing assurance to dominate Moroccan politics. At first he drew heavily on the popularity of his father, Mohammed V, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] cent of De Gaulle and expressions used by President Kennedy. Hassan was particularly impressed in 1957 at seeing visiting Vice President Nixon mingling with crowds of Moroccans, and his own use of such tactics has helped him to win quickly the adulation of the illiterate peasants who comprise 85 percent of Morocco's population.

At the same time Hassan has disarmed his left-wing opposition by adopting many of its socialistic policies. The indecisiveness and factionalism

which developed within the opposition have further helped him consolidate his control.

Hassan's principal achievement has been to give Morocco its first constitution. In getting the document drafted and approved in a referendum and promulgated last December, he fulfilled his father's commitment to provide a constitution before the end of 1962.

Under the constitution, which is patterned after De Gaulle's fifth republic and defines the regime as a "constitutional, social and democratic monarchy," the King has surrendered virtually none of what had been a theoretically absolute power. He continues to play quite disparate roles. He remains the "sacred" symbol of the nation and its spiritual leader. He is also head of the

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government's executive branch, and the powers so derived, added to his spiritual role, far exceed those granted the bicameral legislature to be elected sometime this year.

Hassan's Policies

Hassan's flirtations with the Soviet bloc during the first year of his reign were to some extent an attempt to press the West to be more forthcoming in its offers of assistance. In the past year, however, he has turned more frequently toward the West. This slight shift in emphasis may have resulted from his own pro-Western proclivities as well as from the influence of Ahmed Reda Guedira, his francophile confidant, director of the royal cabinet and minister of agriculture and interior.

Nevertheless, Hassan continues to pay lip service to nonalignment and, when his critics charge that he has become pro-Western, he can point to a military aid agreement with the USSR, civil air agreements with Czechoslovakia and the USSR, and credits from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Hassan has become somewhat disillusioned with Nasir, whose success in playing off the Soviet bloc against the West he had sought to emulate. This disillusionment is as much the result of the Egyptian President's cool attitude toward Hassan during the Casablanca conference in 1961 and Hassan's resistance to UAR patronage as it is to Nasir's

links with Hassan's leftist opposition.

Algerian independence in mid-1962 removed the principal deterrent--Morocco's forthright aid to the rebellion--to the development of closer ties with France. Hassan soon realized that he must compete with Algeria for French economic and military aid, and consequently he has trimmed his sails accordingly.

As the Algerian situation has stabilized, Hassan has become concerned that the Ben Bella regime may encourage republican tendencies within the Moroccan opposition. The King has also become suspicious of Nasir's influence over the Algerian premier. With Baathists in the new Iraqi and Syrian regimes pointedly describing Algeria as a "liberated" country, Hassan's concern may increase.

Hassan has sought to meet this challenge and to ease his country's growing isolation from African and Arab affairs by tightening its bonds with the other North African monarchy, Libya. He has also sought accommodations with Algeria as well as with Spain and Mauritania over Morocco's long-standing territorial claims. He offered to mediate Ben Bella's dispute with Tunisian President Bourguiba, and later seized upon Ben Bella's invitation to visit Algiers from 13 to 15 March. Although coolly received by the Algerians, he probably sought at least a tacit Algerian commitment to desist from encouraging subversive elements in Morocco.

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Hassan's most pressing internal problem is his country's stagnant economy. Although a development program has been drafted and projects for increasing rural employment have been introduced, results are meager. Efforts to stimulate development have been largely palliative, unbalanced, and poorly executed.

The Opposition

The principal opposition to Hassan is the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), a leftist group formed in 1959 and consisting of an educated elite allied with a powerful labor organization. The UNFP objected to the King's procedures in drafting the constitution. It wanted to have a constituent assembly elected to write the document. The UNFP campaigned for abstention in the referendum, but only in its main urban strongholds did it have any impact. Recognizing that the abstention policy was unwise, it will contest as many seats as possible when elections are held, and campaign for amending the constitution to make it more democratic.

The conservative Istiqlal party, which led the fight for the restoration of Mohamed V to the throne and for Morocco's independence, has also gone into the opposition. Its three ministers resigned from the government early this year in an effort to keep Ahmen Guedira from extending his influence into economic development. As the

King's principal adviser, Guedira has become the country's second most influential personality.

In opposition, Istiqlal may prove troublesome. It will hope to prove its strength in the country's first elections, and where seats are lost, can be expected to claim foul play from Guedira, who controls the election machinery. Istiqlal will also continue to exert pressure to maintain policies which it initiated and which have proved troublesome and embarrassing to Hassan. After independence, Istiqlal President Allal el-Fassi initiated Morocco's claims to Mauritania, Spanish Sahara, and westernmost Algeria. Hassan still gives lip service to these policies despite his desire for an accommodation.

Outlook

Since the overwhelming acceptance of his constitution in the December referendum, Hassan has moved with more assurance. Having dropped the Istiqlal, he now has a cabinet composed of men primarily loyal to him. It represents only two relatively minor political groups, and should function with less friction if not more efficiently than its predecessor.

The King has promised parliamentary elections later this year under the new constitution--probably between May and October. The elections, the first such ever to be held in Morocco, should give the first firm indication of the comparative strengths

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of the political parties. The first parliament is likely to convene on 18 November.

Despite his present mastery of his country, Hassan evidently believes that he cannot retain power indefinitely in the face of economic stagnation. His government has cast about for external assistance, and has concluded aid agreements with France and West Germany, as well as with the US and the World Bank.

Hassan apparently hopes that his visit to Washington and other projected trips to Western and African states will improve his own and his country's standing. While in the United States he almost certainly expects to receive commitments of

economic aid beyond what is already projected. He may also request further military assistance, particularly modern aircraft.

Hassan seems likely to agree to continued US use of some air base and communications facilities beyond the end of this year when the air base and Voice of America agreements terminate. He has, however, resisted efforts to pave the way toward an agreement on the use of the naval air facilities at Kenitra by insisting that discussions be held only with the President. Decisions regarding the three other bases have lagged largely because the inexperienced Moroccan officials lacked firm policy direction.
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